5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RLl Turkestan RLl

177 562 dating, employment of men and women in offices and stores — all these factors tend to break down the wall between the sexes. The Muslim youth today is not only increasingly able to plan its future without regard to the wishes of parents, but also has many opportunities to mingle freely with members of the opposite sex. All this helps undermine the traditional habits 517 583 in marriage selection. Among the urban Muslim intelligentsia it appears now to be the rule for the young couples to decide upon marriage first and to ask parents for permission afterwards, as is done in Western societies. In the villages, where the hold of tradition is stronger and the family more closely knit, the parents still do play an important, and perhaps even decisive, role in the arrangement of marriages; but here, too, the tendency seems to run against tradition.

583 177 An influential factor in the marriage arrangement among Central Asian Muslims was the *kalym*, or bride price. The *kalym* was paid to the parents of the bride by the parents of the bridegroom prior to the wedding. In the steppe regions, it consisted usually of livestock, averaging in pre-Revolutionary days from 50 to 100 horses and an equal or larger number of sheep — a sizeable fortune by local standards. In Turkestan, the *kalym* consisted of gifts of money, jewels, or other valuables. The payment of the *kalym* is one of the few traditions of a nonreligious nature outlawed by the Soviet regime, ostensibly as "degrading" to women, but its illegality explains only in part its actual decline, which is probably due more to the impoverishment of the native population over the past 25 years. What Kazakh disposes of 50 horses or sheep? Poverty seems to have reduced the tradition of the *kalym* to a purely symbolic significance. It apparently continues to survive in one form or another throughout Central Asia, but it no longer performs any important economic function.

836 177 One of the more startling results of information gathered from refugees is the impression of strict sexual morality prevailing among Soviet Muslims. Despite the freer mingling of sexes, there is little opportunity for sexual promiscuity because of the close watch exercised over the girls by their families and the great value attached by the natives to virginity. Most of the refugees agreed that an unmarried Muslim girl who has lost her virginity — no matter under what circumstances — is considered to be on the same level as a common prostitute. Her chances of marriage are almost nonexistent, because it is generally accepted that a marriage contract is void if the bride is found on the wedding night not to be a virgin. On the whole, sexual licentiousness seems rare: it is prevented by tradition and by the control exercised by the family, to whom a deflowered daughter not only brings public disgrace but also represents a lasting financial liability.[4]

[4] Newspapers and periodicals from Central Asia indicate that, despite Soviet efforts aimed at changing native attitudes toward women, tradition persists. It seems apparently to be quite common practice for natives to withdraw daughters from school when the girls attain the